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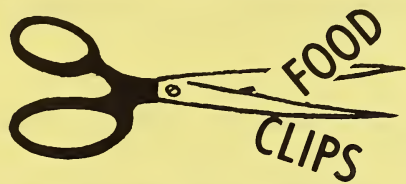
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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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For young, tender vegetables, 1/2 to 1 cup of water is usually enough for six servings. Water to cover is needed for some older root vegetables that require longer cooking, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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Dried herbs are more concentrated than fresh herbs.

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Watching calories? Use low-fat white sauce -- in place of standard sauce. It's made with skim or reconstituted nonfat dry milk.

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Canned clingstone peaches usually cost less than freestone peaches and are firm in texture and attractive in appearance, according to USDA home economists.

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Dried apricots are a good concentrated source of vitamin A.

OPEN DATING

—Regulations Extended

"Open dating" regulations on meat and poultry products will be effective December 8, 1974 -- not September 8th as previously stated -- according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Industry consumer advisors and home economists and the media are being asked to cooperate in emphasizing open-dating to the public. Consumer education programs on the meaning of open dating on meat and poultry packages are being expanded. In-store promotions are also being encouraged through posters and bag stuffers so that the general public will not only become more aware of the open dating regulations but of understanding the meaning of the dates.

The 90 days extension period was allowed for the voluntary meat and poultry open dating regulations because the Federally-inspected suppliers couldn't obtain the necessary equipment to make changes in their current open dating of meat and poultry products.

YOU JUST CAN'T CAN —

Every pot called a "pressure cooker" is not suitable for canning, cautions Dr. Ruth Patrick of the Louisiana State University Cooperative Extension Service.

"Some pressure saucepans sold today are designed for fast cooking only," she notes. The pressure saucepans for quick cooking have a single control for 15 pounds of pressure which is not suitable for canning.

Ten pounds of pressure is used for canning meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables (except tomatoes). Pressure is required in canning these foods to reach temperatures higher than boiling. High temperature kills harmful bacteria and inactivates enzymes. Air must also be excluded in canning to prevent food from spoiling.

Use Pressure Gauge

When buying new canning equipment, look for a cooker-canner with a pressure gauge. The control, usually found on the lid, may be a weighted control or a dial.

A weighted gauge automatically limits pressure by a control pre-set for 5, 10, or 15 pounds. The weighted control is simple, accurate, and never needs calibrating.

The dial control indicates the pressure on a numbered instrument. This type pressure gauge must be checked periodically for accuracy. The checking of canner gauges is sometimes done as a service by the Cooperative Extension Service, often called the County Agent's office. (Check in your locality for such services.)

The small pressure saucepan made by one manufacturer can be adapted for canning with the purchase of a special pressure regulator (which must be ordered from the manufacturer).

When using a pressure saucepan, the processing times for home canning must be extended 20 minutes over those required for use with a pressure canner.

— With Any Saucepan!

Retail outlets are often unaware of the need or availability of the regulator because no information on this is given in instructions or on the box of the quick cookers.

Certain types of small pressure cookers of four to six-quart capacity may also be used for canning if the pressure can be controlled at 10 pounds.

A small pressure cooker-canner must have a domed lid or be deep enough to cover pint jars. The small canners hold from three to six pint jars and therefore are practical only for canning small quantities.



PRESSURE POTS DIFFER--Not all pots that cook with pressure are suited for canning foods, remind nutritionists of the Extension Service. The two pots in the rear may be used for canning because they have gauges that control pressure accurately. The pot at left has a weighted control. The one at right has a dial gauge. The pressure saucepan in foreground with a 15 pound pressure control is designed for quick cooking and should not be used to can.

PREPARING FOOD FOR THE FREEZER?

— Pack it right!

One cardinal point in preparing food for the freezer is -- to pack it right, U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists warn.

What steps should you take to assure that you are doing it right? First, when hot food is ready to be frozen, it should be cooled quickly in order to retard growth of bacteria, and to help it retain the natural flavor, color, and texture.

What's the best way to cool food quickly? Put the food in 8 x 8 inch pans lined with heat-resistant freezer wrap. Use one pan for each six servings. Pack food tightly to avoid air pockets and then let it stand at room temperatures about 30 minutes before sealing. Food must be tightly sealed with freezer tape and labeled (with date of freezing, and last date the food should be used for best eating quality).

You can freeze two or three pounds (or one 8 x 8 inch pan) of food per cubic foot of freezer space at one time. Leave the food in the pan for 10 to 12 hours until it is completely frozen. Then, remove wrapped food (airtight packages) from the pans and store the frozen food at zero degrees or below. (This frees your pan for general use again.) Most combination main dishes can be stored for as long as six months.

NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535A, Office of Communication/Press Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.
